MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

STUDENT ID NO

MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

FINAL EXAMINATION

TRIMESTER 1, 2016/2017 SESSION

BAE1034 - ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS STUDIES

(All groups/sections)

11 OCTOBER 2016
2.30 pm - 5.30 pm
(3 Hours)

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENT

1. This question paper consists of 6 pages with 3 sections only.
2. Answer **ALL** questions.
3. Write all your answers in the answer booklet.

SECTION A: READING COMPREHENSION [20 MARKS]

Instructions: Read the passage carefully and answer ALL questions that follow.

Innovation Starts - And Ends - With Mindset

1 In her bestselling book *Mindset*, psychologist Carol Dweck argues that people who see their skills as a fixed set of strengths and weaknesses tend not to achieve much. On the other hand, those that see their skills as dynamic and changeable are able to continually grow their abilities and soar to great heights.

2 Businesses are the same way. Most see their business models as a permanent facet of their DNA, so when their environment changes, they fail to adapt. That is why 87 percent of the companies on Fortune's original list of 500 top firms are no longer there. Over time, most companies get better and better at things that people want less and less.

3 [1.] Firms like Procter & Gamble, General Electric and IBM still thrive after a century or more. The reason they endure is that they do not see their business as fixed, but have continually reinvented themselves and are vastly different enterprises than when they started. In an age of disruption, the only viable strategy is to adapt.

4 As an example, Chester Carlson was a prototypical inventor. Self taught and brilliant, he worked for years tinkering with his invention even while holding down a day job and going to law school at night. When his wife grew tired of the explosions he made mixing chemicals in the kitchen, he moved his work to a second floor room in the house.

5 After working on it for over a decade, he finally teamed up with the Haloid corporation. They built a superior product, but it cost nearly ten times what competitive machines did. They tried to interest the great companies such as Kodak, IBM and GE, but all demurred. [2.] Then Joe Wilson, the President of Haloid, had a billion dollar idea. Instead of selling their machines, why don't they lease them? The idea took off and the company we now know as the Xerox Corporation was born.

6 Over the years, Xerox continued to innovate along its business model. New products came out that could print more copies faster, which not only increased customer satisfaction, but made Xerox a lot more money. It plowed those profits back into more innovation, a legendary direct sales operation and even better and faster copiers.

7 In 1961, the company listed on the New York Stock Exchange and, as it continued to grow by leaps and bounds, it attracted a cadre of highly qualified executives who honed its model further. Because it made the bulk of its money on the number of copies printed, that became Xerox's key metric of success. So when new Japanese competitors arrived with cheaper, slower copiers for smaller businesses, it did not seem like much of a threat. After all, those customers could not generate enough copies to be attractive to Xerox anyway. But before long, big firms started to see the benefits of machines that could fit in each office, rather than taking up an entire room.

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8 By the late 1970's, Xerox's copier business was in trouble, but it had an ace up its sleeve. Its PARC division had developed a new kind of computer, the Alto, that had many of the features we would recognize today, such as a mouse, a graphical user interface and an ethernet that could link the machines together in a network.

9 [3.] Although there was no lack of interest in the Alto as a standalone machine, the executives at Xerox did not see its potential. Instead, they integrated it into a much bigger system, the Star, which cost $16,00 per unit and $50,000 to $100,000 for a full installation. In short order, IBM launched the PC, Apple came out with the Macintosh and Xerox's computer business - as well as its position in the top echelon of American industry - was finished.

10 Within Xerox, PARC was like a world unto itself. While the headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut was a bastion of corporate staidness, a 1972 profile by Stewart Brand portrayed the hackers at PARC as freewheeling hippie geniuses, creating their own personal brand of revolution with long hair and bare feet. [4.] Up to that point, computers were massive machines that were divided among a group of highly trained specialists through time sharing systems. However, the visionaries at PARC saw that computers could become much simpler devices that ordinary people could use by themselves. A full two thirds of the Alto's power was devoted to the display to make it as user friendly as possible.

11 Nevertheless, in their own way, the hackers at PARC were just as myopic as the suits back in Stamford. For example, two of the scientists at PARC, Dick Shoup and Alvy Ray Smith, were working on a new graphics technology called SuperPaint. Unfortunately, it did not fit in with the PARC's vision of personal computing; the two were ostracized and eventually both left. Smith teamed up with another graphics pioneer, Ed Catmull, at the New York Institute of Technology. Later they joined George Lucas, who saw the potential for computer graphics to create a new paradigm for special effects. Eventually, the operation was spun out and bought by Steve Jobs. That company, Pixar, was sold to Disney in 2006 for $7.4 billion.

12 It is easy to look at any of these stories and say, "how could *they* be so dumb?" It seems obvious, in retrospect, that there would be a large market for desktop copiers, that personal computing would grow to be a major industry and that tremendous value would be unlocked from sophisticated computer graphics. Yet the unfortunate truth is that we evolve to survive, not adapt. We fear losing what we have more than we desire winning something we do not. The better we get at doing one thing, the less we want to work on something else.What is more, we tend to surround ourselves with people who think like we do and they reinforce our inherent biases.

13 [5.] The executives at Xerox were trained at business school to maximize profitability by optimizing the value chain and those around them thought the same way. The scientists at PARC were part of an early culture that was resolute on developing personal computers, advanced

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graphics were not on their radar screen.

14 It is easy to complain - as so many do - that others "don't get it." We love to talk about disrupting markets and industries, but rarely put forth the effort to disrupt ourselves. That requires a change in mindset and, for most of us, it is just too hard. 95

Adapted from Finn, P. (2016, April 24). *Innovation starts – and ends – with mindset.* Retrieved from http://www.digitaltonto.com/2016/innovation-starts-and-ends-with-mindset/

Author's Biography

Patrick Finn is a New York-based Head of Marketing, focusing on developing, implementing and driving marketing strategies for Cynergy Data. Previously, he worked at Konica Minolta and Microsoft for over 10 years managing marketing, brand awareness and ad technology. Patrick has recently been named *Top 40 Social Media Marketing Expert You Need to Know* by LinkedIn.

Question I (5 marks)
Instructions: Decide which of the sentences (a) – (e) best fits in each of the boxes labelled 1-5 in the passage.

a. Yet once again, the corporate mindset took over. ☐

b. The point is that it takes work to change your mindset. ☐

c. Of course, that is not always true. ☐

d. And true revolutionaries they were. ☐

e. There just didn't seem to be a value proposition that would justify the cost. ☐

Question II (5 marks)
Instructions: Find a word in the passage for each of the meanings below.

a. feasible and workable (Paragraph 3)
b. objected or showed reluctance (Paragraph 5)
c. improved and refined (Paragraph 7)
d. a level of rank or reputation (Paragraph 9)
e. narrow-minded (Paragraph 11)

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Question III (10 marks)
Instructions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

a. How do companies that are able to endure and sustain their businesses differ from those that are not? (2 marks)

b. What does the author mean by the phrase "it had an ace up its sleeve" (lines 42 - 43)? (1 mark)

c. State two key factors that downgraded the position of Xerox's computer business in the American industry. (2 marks)

d. What does "*They*" in line 76 refer to? (1 mark)

e. According to the author, why do people evolve to survive but not to adapt? (3 marks)

f. What is the tone used by the author in the last paragraph? (1 mark)

SECTION B: CRITIQUE WRITING [10 MARKS]

Question I (10 marks)
Instructions: Based on the reading text, evaluate the author's and text's **validity, objectivity** and **credibility**. Support your answers with detailed elaboration and provide evidence from the text where necessary. Write your answers in 200 – 250 words.

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SECTION C: LANGUAGE FOCUS [30 MARKS]

Question I (10 marks)

Instructions: Construct a concise sentence based on each set of sentences in the questions below.

Example: (0) In the month of April, we detected a quality control issue. It was instructed by the CEO that this item be presented by the manager at the next board meeting.
The CEO instructed the manager to present the quality control issue detected last April in the next board meeting.

a. Last June, a talk on women entrepreneurship was organised by an SME association from Singapore. It was an annual event. A total of a hundred participants attended the talk. (2 marks)

b. This email is sent in reference to your enquiry dated May 27. We would like to inform you that the goods which you have ordered will be delivered in the near future once payment has been made. (2 marks)

c. DK Curtains owes Euro Textiles a substantial sum of RM1.1 million from their last order. In spite of the fact that the bill remains unpaid, they recently placed more orders. (2 marks)

d. In the period between 2010 and 2015, a total of more than 50% of start-ups failed which was caused by inadequate financial management. Such findings were reported by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) in China. (2 marks)

e. Datuk Amir Bakri, the person responsible in managing Data Comm, has decided to conduct meetings discussing operational matters once every three months. This move has been approved by the company's stakeholders. (2 marks)

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Question II (10 marks)

Instructions: For each word below, add a suitable affix or affixes, and construct a sentence set in a business context using the newly-formed word.

Example: (0) popular (Add a suffix)
Word: popularity
Sentence: Online shopping in Malaysia is poised for significant growth, given its rising popularity and adoption among local consumers.

a. equal (Add a prefix)

b. mobile (Add a prefix)

c. accident (Add a suffix)

d. commit (Add a suffix)

e. employ (Add a prefix and a suffix)

Question III (10 marks)

Instructions: For each idiom below, explain its meaning and construct a sentence set in a business context using the given idiom.

Example: (0) under the table
Meaning: A secret, hidden action
Sentence: Raihan was given money under the table to turn down the joint venture offer.

a. cut corners

b. game plan

c. whole nine yards

d. add insult to injury

e. last straw

End of Paper